



# The River Review

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON ★ JULY 13-18, 2009

Presented by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Department of Veterans Affairs

Photo Courtesy of Spokane Regional CVB/Alan Bisson

A Publication of the 29th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Volume 1, Issue 6 — July 18, 2009

## The Value of Competition

The value of competition can be measured in high fives, handshakes and “good jobs.” Competition is good for the body, mind and spirit. It demands everyone’s concerted efforts, forcing people to achieve their very best. It allows athletes, and everyone around them, to see firsthand what can be accomplished

Competition is healthy and normal...

- Carole Atkinson

when giving it your all. Finally, it teaches humility and respect for one another, which in turn binds Veterans closer together as friends, and brothers and sisters in arms.

Judy Stutts, Administrative Officer for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and VA recreation therapist, believes that competition leads to a more meaningful life for disabled Veterans. “A physical limitation doesn’t have to mean life without competitive and recreational sports and activities,” Stutts said. “Sports provide physical conditioning, increased body awareness, improved socialization, better emotional well-being and overall improved physical and mental health. It’s not the outcome of the game that counts, but the competition, camaraderie and enjoyment that you received from it.”

Jimmy May, a 59-year-old combat-wounded Army Veteran of Vietnam, is a testament to what competition can do for a person’s physical and social health. He has been competing in this event since the first Games were held back in 1981. “I have competed in 27 National Veterans Wheelchair Games and have only missed one year because of surgery,” said May. “The Games have kept me healthy, and the camaraderie and friendships made every year are so great. I encourage all Veterans to give this event a try.”

Carole Atkinson, a 77-year-old Navy Veteran of the Korean War, also likes

to compete. “I enjoy watching the younger Veterans come alive when they compete for the first time,” said Atkinson. “Competition is healthy and normal. I practice year-round because we have to work much harder than the average person.”

For David Robinson, a 64-year-old Marine Corps Veteran who also served in Vietnam, being able to compete has many benefits. “The Wheelchair Games are a great way to respond to the call of excellence,” said Robinson. “The competition is a gift for Veterans that allows us to interact with each other. This is my fourth time attending the Games and I always look forward to the whole experience. Each day is a challenge and I welcome it.”

Dennis Thomas, 49, a Navy Veteran from San Jose, may sum it up best. “I enjoy going to the Wheelchair Games to see old friends and make new ones,” he said. “It is good to feel the sweet success of victory – and even feel the pain of defeat. Competition is what brings us all together to let us show others what we are able to do.”

No matter who you talk to, you will hear the same things. The Games are all about competition and camaraderie. They inspire athletes to try their best, and take the lessons they learn here home with them, in hopes that those lessons will lead to fuller and more meaningful lives. The friendships forged at the Games are ones that will last a lifetime – and for those reasons, the value of competition is truly priceless.



Carole Atkinson



Jimmy May



David Robinson



# Closing Ceremonies and Banquet

All good things must come to and end, so let's go out with a bang! Celebrate the many accomplishments and friendships made this week at tonight's Closing Ceremonies and Banquet. Join us as we celebrate all of the amazing things that happened here this week – personal bests in long-standing competitions, award-winning accomplishments in first-time events, a gold medal here or there, as well as new friends, good times and great memories.

The Closing Ceremonies and Banquet will be held in the Spokane Convention Center, Halls B and C beginning at 7 p.m. There's no need to rush to reserve seating this year. The local organizing committee has implemented a new system that already assigned you a seat at the time your ticket was purchased. What a great way to help make sure you have a seat next to your families and friends.

The Ceremonies Committee has lots in store for the evening. Tonight's Mistress of Ceremonies will be Shelly Monahan, reporter and anchor from KHQ, the local NBC affiliate. Music will be provided by pianist Doug Scott and soloist Tracy O'Donnal, who

plans to sing the National Anthem as well as the crowd-pleasing "God Bless the U.S.A."

As always, the much anticipated 2009 Spirit of the Games winner will be announced at the end of tonight's ceremony. Each year, the Spirit of the Games winner is selected by Games officials and the honor is bestowed upon one athlete who best demonstrates the qualities of athletic excellence, sportsmanship and strength of character throughout the week of the Games.

Don't miss the video highlight presentation, an annual tradition, which captures the events and emotions of the past week as recorded by longtime Games videographer Steve Wiggins and his colleague Jason Grant. Featuring challenges, teamwork, the thrill of victory (and sometimes the agony of defeat), friendship, fellowship, tears and joy, the video is always a very special highlight of the Games.

Please join us as we celebrate and reflect on the past week, and look forward to passing the torch to our friends in Denver who are already working hard to make sure the 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be another outstanding event next July.

## Kids' Day a Huge Success



There's no better gift than teaching a child something wonderful, which is exactly how many of the athletes involved in Kids Day feel. This is very special event that has been held for nine consecutive years and is held for local area children with physical disabilities. It provides a unique opportunity to introduce and educate these young participants about the exciting world of disabled sports.

Yesterday, the children were introduced to interactive and educational events that included basketball, t-ball, and slalom. A look of exhilaration could be seen on their faces as they finished the slalom course, made a home run or got "nothin' but net" in basketball.

"It's great to just have fun and play sports," says Spencer Kimbro, a nine-year-old participant at Kids Day. Kimbro, like many of the participants, shows a lot of promise as an athlete in all of the events, but his favorite was t-ball.

Wheelchair Games athletes took time out of the competition to mentor children like Kimbro to give them a glimpse of what they can do and achieve as athletes. It's gratifying for many of the mentors to let these kids know that despite the many challenges they face, anything is possible if you try. "Kids Day is my favorite event at the Wheelchair Games," said Alan Lewis, who was a mentor at the event.

This is a truly inspiring event, unique to the Games, that warms your heart and brings a tear to your eye as you hear these young athletes cry out, "I can do it!"





## Take Me Out To The Ballgame!



Today may be our last day in Spokane but it's also Softball Day at the Games! All softball events will take place today at Spokane Falls Community College beginning at 8 a.m., with the championship game scheduled for 3:30 p.m. So if you're a fan of this All-American sport, come out to watch our softball teams as they go for the gold and demonstrate why they're all true "All Stars!" (Be sure to "root, root, root for the home team, 'cause if they don't win it's a shame – and it's one, two, three strikes you're out at the old ballgame...")

## Media coverage

This year's Games have been covered by media the world over! More than 500 print and television media and over 4,000 radio broadcast stations have already told your story this week.

Here's a sampling of the media coverage of this week's events:

- Air Force News
- All Local TV Stations – ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX
- Armed Forces Press Service
- Armed Forces Radio
- CBS National Radio
- Challenge Magazine
- CNN Headline News
- Fox News Medical Unit
- Fox Sports
- Fox Sports Net
- LA Times
- Local Radio Stations
- News and Views – 500 Radio Stations Nationwide
- Outdoor Channel

- Physical Issues Radio
- PN Magazine
- Satellite Media Tour - Over 3,000
- Radio & TV Stations Nationwide
- Spokane Review Local Paper – 3-Days Front Page
- Sports and Spokes Magazine
- Sports Illustrated
- SWEAT Magazine
- Talk of the Nation – 500 Radio Stations Nationwide
- VA News
- Voice of America – 1000 Radio Stations Nationwide
- Xable – 24 hour streaming live video of Games

And many more to still to come! Look for a great photo in Sports Illustrated's "leading off" photo spread in another week or two.



**Q** ~ In the next ten years, what changes do you predict in the world of spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury and amputation management? ~ Curious George from Georgia

**A** ~ Dear George: The factors that could play a role in future management of various medical conditions are enormous. Current and future dynamic research projects have emerged that could make huge contributions.

Some of the ongoing spinal cord injury projects include examining neuropathic pain, looking at osteoporosis treatment and fracture prevention, and studying pressure ulcer management and prevention. One exciting area of research includes regenerative medicine. According to Wikipedia, the term refers to research into treatments that restore adult body parts, such as studying stem or progenitor cells in exciting new ways. These include both adult and embryonic stem cells. Adult stem cells can be harvested from fat, bone marrow, blood or the nasal cavity. Some progenitor cells have already been used in the treatment of both leukemia and lymphoma. Embryonic stem cells are taken from blastocysts of human eggs, and have recently been approved for use in the U.S. Potential stem cell research and treatment areas include brain injury, cancer, spinal cord injury, heart disease, blood cell formation, baldness, tooth growth, deafness, blindness, ALS, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, wound healing, birth defects and many more.

Research in functional electrical stimulation of various nerves for upper and lower extremity movement is also being done. This involves using electrical currents to activate the nerves. Even robotic equipment and exoskeletons are being designed and studied to help people walk, stand, climb stairs and make other movements.

Research allows us to think outside the box in innovative ways. Mirror therapy for single and double limb amputees represents one of those innovations as it looks at treating phantom limb pain with mirrors.

The possibilities are numerous with continuing research, and there are opportunities for everyone to get involved – whether as a researcher, a subject participant or a supporter. VA is a world leader in medical and health systems research, internationally recognized for research advances taking place every day throughout the country. Contact your local VA facility to learn more.

**Dr. Dan** (Today's Ghostwriter: Dr. Kevin T. White)



"Dr. Daniel Scott, Medical Director of the Wheelchair Games, is a staff physician at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in Denver. Here's what he and his team have to say about today's topic."







Roll'n on the River...





# Roll'n on the River...





# Saturday, July 18



Saturday's Meal Hours SCC, Ballroom 100 A/B/C	
Breakfast	6 - 8 a.m.
Lunch	10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
SCC, Riverside B/C	
Closing Banquet	7 p.m.

## Meals for the Games end today at lunch.

### Breakfast

Scrambled eggs, hash brown potatoes, bacon, sausage, grilled ham, biscuits & gravy, oatmeal, cold cereal, fresh fruit, muffins, Danish, fresh juice, coffee, hot tea and milk

### Today's Option:

Breakfast burritos served with sour cream and salsa

### Lunch

Fresh salad bar (lettuce, cherry tomatoes, cheddar cheese, croutons, sunflower seeds, beets, assorted beans), potato salad, fresh vegetables, dinner rolls assorted desserts, coffee, iced tea with lemons and milk

### Today's Option:

Baked tilapia or burgandy beef tips and noodles; and rice pilaf

### Dinner - Closing Banquet (must have ticket to attend)

Mixed greens with cheddar cheese, sunflower seeds, and choice of ranch or vinaigrette dressings; grilled tri-tip steak and trio mushroom marsala chicken (no mushrooms on steak); red potato mashed potatoes; baby carrots & broccoli florets; assorted dinner rolls with butter

Dessert: white chocolate huckleberry cheesecake or chocolate sorrento torte  
Freshly brewed coffee (regular and decaffeinated) and hot tea service

## Before You Depart...

Please make sure that you turn in the debit cards you've been using for your meals. Drop-off boxes will be available after the lunch meal, as well as at the Closing Banquet. The Games will be charged for any cards not turned in.



Don't leave the Games without your memorabilia items! Visit Convention Center, Room 103 for fantastic hats, towels, sports bags, mugs, water bottles, shirts and more. Hours today: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## Wheelchair Repair

The Wheelchair Repair Shop is located at the Doubletree Hotel Suite B and remains open today 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Service for minor repairs is available at the Spokane Convention Center and all off-site venues from 8 a.m., through the end of the final event. Wheelchair repair will also be present at the airport at departure times. If you need emergency wheelchair repair after hours, please call (509) 993-6242.

## Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Return

How easy can we make this for you? Just leave it in your hotel room! We've already made arrangements to come by and pick it up after you've checked out. Just make sure that the room you're leaving it in is the same room you filled out on the sheet when you signed for your equipment.



**Medical suites** are located at the **Doubletree Hotel Room 1102 and Davenport Towers Room 2170**. They open today at 7 a.m. and will close tonight at 10:30 p.m.

For athletes staying at the Courtyard by Marriott, Fairfield Inn, Oxford Suites or Travelodge, medical assistance will be available tonight. If an athlete has a medical emergency, call the hotel operator and they will communicate with the physician on-call. At other times, Veterans should go to the medical suites located at the Doubletree, Davenport Towers or at the Spokane Convention Center (SCC).

The **medical suite at the SCC, Riverside B/C** opens at 7 a.m. until the last event at the SCC has ended today. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, please have the hotel operator call 911. Only registered athletes or registered volunteers on duty may be treated by Games' medical staff. A list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available for family members who need medical assistance.

## Awards Presentation Schedule

Awards being presented today are handcycling, archery, softball, powerchair 200 and motor rally.

Once results are confirmed, they will be posted on the TV monitors located in the Convention Center.

**Awards area will be open for 30 minutes following the banquet for medal pick-up.**



### Awards Schedule

Saturday, July 18	11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
-------------------	------------------

## Sunday Departure Info...

Each athlete was issued a color-coded tag for the airline being used for departure. Tags were distributed to the six hotels. Please check with the hotel's front desk for your packet if you have not received it previously. If you are unable to locate your tags, call (509) 342-1030 to contact Laurel Morse, accommodations chair, or her assistant, Tim Cipoletti.

### Tonight:

- For all flights **departing prior to noon tomorrow**, please place your luggage outside your door between the hours of **4 p.m. and 10 p.m.**
- For all flights **departing at noon and later**, please place your luggage outside your door between **11 p.m. and 4 a.m.**
- If you have later flights, we highly encourage you to place your luggage out early. It will be supervised at the airport as per airport regulations.

Feel free to call the front desk of your hotel to let them know that your luggage is ready for pick up.

Buses will begin departing at 2:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. approximately every 45 minutes. Please be at the airport **at least two hours** before your flight to claim your baggage and check in. Expect delays at security.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games bring together wheelchair athletes from all over the nation (and beyond), representing all branches of the military service. We hope you took the time to meet as many as you can. Here is a little information about six of your fellow competitors at this week's Games. They all are "Someone You Should Know." Today's column highlights the youngest and oldest Veterans at the Games this week.



At the age of 21, Tim Vixay, a Marine Corps Veteran from Oregon City, Ore., is the youngest athlete at the Games this week. A Lacrosse player all through high school, Vixay was very active before his swimming accident in 2008. He thought life was over after his injury until he heard about the Games during therapy. Vixay saw

the event as an opportunity to become active again and resume competing. Vixay had this to say about what he's learned so far, "You cannot set limits – anything is possible. It is good to be around other wheelchair users. It motivates you to do more and be more independent."

Vixay describes his VA care as a blessing that provides the physical therapy and equipment he needs to live independently and be the athlete he once was. He practiced with a local quad rugby team and used those new skills in competition earlier this week. Vixay also participated in air guns, trapshooting and slalom. As a novice athlete, he hopes to leave Spokane with some medals around his neck.



As the youngest female Veteran here, Aubrey Youngs, 27, is wise beyond her years, managing to see the positive side of everything. "I've learned that if something isn't going your way, just stop and think about it and then try again." Youngs, a National Guard Veteran from Newburgh, Ind., served in Operations Iraqi Freedom

and Enduring Freedom, and was injured in a fall while on duty in the service. Youngs' physical therapist suggested she participate in the Winter Sports Clinic, her first national rehabilitation event, and also the Wheelchair Games. Competing in the events gets her out of the house more and she takes comfort in knowing she will have at least two things in common with other athletes – being a Veteran and being disabled.

Now, Youngs wants to help newcomers to the Games. "Don't be afraid to ask for help," she said. "Everyone competing here has been through what you have."

She is also pursuing an education in game development to create interactive rehabilitation simulation software for the disabled that can work in conjunction with traditional physical therapy. Despite the competitive spirit here, Youngs believes the whole point of this event is to have fun and enjoy the experience.



Russell Worth, an 85-year-old Navy Veteran from Brown Deer, Wis., is the eldest athlete competing in the Games this week. He first attended the 1993 Wheelchair Games in San Antonio, Texas, and has competed every year since. Worth also attends the Winter Sports Clinic.

An automobile accident in 1991 broke his back, paralyzing him. Two years later, his therapist convinced him to compete in the Games, suggesting table tennis, archery, swimming and bowling.

That year, he won gold medals in bowling and table tennis.

This week, Worth competed in track, swimming, and table tennis and his training regimen includes weights and yard work. He also is inspired by the camaraderie and the chance to mentor newcomers and newly injured Veterans at the Games. "Attitude is everything," said Worth. "I hope that others can learn that from me."



For 18 years now, Clair Brou, 81, has been coming to the Wheelchair Games. S female participant next to Melanie Downing, who is older by a mere 10 days. Brou is a medically retired Air Force Captain from Ocean Springs, Miss., and she enjoys coming to the Games each year to see all the people that she's met in the past. "Competing in

the National Veterans Wheelchair Games always keeps me going," said Brou. "I'm also glad to see that we have more women athletes participating." She trains for her events as often as she can and hopes to continue attending the Games for many more years.



SCC, Riverside B.C.



If you are missing an item, please check in with our Lost and Found in the Convention Center, Room 102 A/B. Hours will be from 8 a.m. through 5 p.m. today.

Departures sites	Time
Hotels to SCC Hub and back entrance, and return to Hotels	5:15 a.m. and every 15 minutes until 10:30 p.m.
SCC Hub to Spokane Falls Community College	6:30 a.m. every 15 minutes throughout the day
Spokane Falls Community College to the HUB	Will operate every 15 minutes throughout the day until 5:30 p.m.
Last bus departs Hub to hotels	10:30 p.m.
Last volunteer shuttle departs Hub	11 p.m.

## Cartoon of the Day



"Honestly, do you really think anyone will be interested in what you write every day, Blog?"